

Testimony of
Tammy Papa, Director
City of Bridgeport ~ Lighthouse Program

to the

Elementary and Secondary Education Appropriations Subcommittee

February 21, 2017

RE: State After School Grant
And
Youth Service Bureau and Enhancement Grants

Good evening. My name is Tammy Papa and I am the Director of Youth Services for the City of Bridgeport. Our department administers the Lighthouse Before School, After School and Summer Program as well as the Youth Service Bureau and Enhancement Grant programs. On behalf of our partner agencies and the children and families we serve with the above funds, I would like to thank Senators Slossberg and Somers as well as Representative Rosario and members of the Elementary and Secondary Education Appropriations Subcommittee for the opportunity to submit testimony to you today in support of after school and youth service bureau funding. Now more than ever, the after school community of teachers, paraprofessionals, school administrators, parents, children, and social service organizations need your support in restoring full funding and keeping all three line items as they currently exist in the state budget. Doing so will ensure that at a minimum, the current number of children receiving services will continue to do so. This of course is far from the expectation that we would be in a position to ask for the additional allocation so desperately needed.

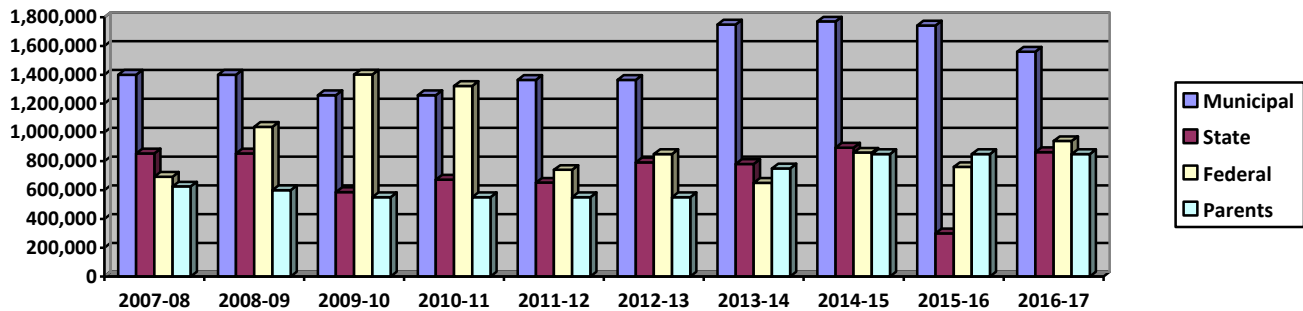
Below please find a few facts about Bridgeport's Lighthouse Program, which relies on this funding to meet the needs of its students and is currently the state's largest provider of after school services.

Lighthouse After School and Summer Program Statistics
Bridgeport, Connecticut

- History:** Partnership that began in 1993 between the City of Bridgeport, Board of Education, and numerous faith and community based organizations, as well as institutions of higher education. ***The program is nationally recognized for excellence.***
- Serving:** Roughly 2,600 Bridgeport children in grades Pre-K through grade 8 during the school year from 3:00 – 5:30 p.m. daily and 2,400 during the summer for five weeks from 8:30 – 5:30 p.m. daily. Programs take place in 24 public schools. Of the 339 parent surveys returned, 47% are single parent households, 51% have earned a high school diploma, and 73.5% report household incomes of less than \$40,000 evidence that socio-economic conditions in Bridgeport continue to fall well below state and national averages.
- Offerings:** Includes healthy snack, homework/tutorial session, curriculum based activities, recreation, sports, computer and video technology, arts and crafts, educational board games, music, dance, drama, drumming, poetry, and so much more.

Percent of Public School Student Population Served: Approximately 12% for the 2016-2017 school year.

Lighthouse Revenue History:



Impact of Eliminated/Reduced State Funding in 2017-2018 on After School:

Currently, nine after school and summer locations receive state funding. This equates to approximately 40% of our sites overall and roughly 1,200 children. Should state after school funding be eliminated, the city would have no choice but to close after school and summer locations leaving a minimum of 1,000 children without access to safe, affordable quality programs. Inevitably this has an economic impact on Bridgeport as well. Parents would need to decide whether to quit their jobs and care for their children or continue to work and leave them home unattended.

Evaluation Findings:

Yale 4-year study shows academic growth, higher expectations of success, socially acceptable behavior, and a lower body mass index among participants when compared to children in parent, family or self care during after-school hours.

MRM evaluation 2014-15 shows 84% of students surveyed and 95% of parents surveyed are generally satisfied with the program with 97% of parents and 89% of students noting the program is safe. Principals and site coordinators note homework help/academic support as well as a safe, supportive and nurturing environment to be the two highest factors contributing to a successful program.

Impact of Eliminated/Reduced Youth Service Bureau and Enhancement Funding in 2017-2018:

Currently, the city sub contracts YSB and YSB Enhancement funding out to a total of 13 social service agencies providing a wide range of services to youth and families. Such services include mentoring, parenting classes, reentry and juvenile justice programs, after school activities, college prep services, crisis intervention, pre-k nutrition, pregnancy prevention, and arts programs reaching approximately 1,500 youth each year. Should this funding source be eliminated or combined with the school based youth diversion program, social service agencies, which are at capacity and looking for additional funds, will be eliminated from the equation and forced to downsize the very programs they are looking to expand in an effort to meet the growing need.

I sincerely ask you consider the impact these cuts will have on Connecticut families and urge you to reject the Governor's recommended budget with respect to the above line items. Thank you for your time.